

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to FIGS. 1, 2, 4, 6 and 11. These sheets, which include FIGS. 1-6, 11 and 12, replace the original sheets that included FIGS. 1-6, 11 and 12. In FIGS. 1, 2 and 4, the reference numerical 26 which designated the coupled end had has been deleted and numeral 25 now identifies this feature. The lip 45 is now illustrated in FIG. 6 and the protrusion 72 is more prominently depicted in FIG. 11.

REMARKS

DRAWINGS

As previously discussed in the in the *Amendments to the Drawings* section of this paper, FIGS. 1, 2, 4, 6 and 11 have been amended as indicated by the annotated drawing sheets attached hereto. The new drawing sheets, also attached hereto, which include FIGS. 1-6, 11 and 12, replace the original sheets that included FIGS. 1-6, 11 and 12. No further elaboration or explanation is believed necessary. The submission of new FIGS. 1, 2, 4, 6 and 11 is in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.84 and consideration of these figures is respectfully requested.

The aforementioned submission of the new figures does not add new matter within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 132. It is respectfully requested that this amendment be entered

SPECIFICATION

Paragraph 30 has been amended to identify the “coupled end” with reference numeral 25 in correspondence with the amendments to the figures previously discussed. No further elaboration is believe necessary.

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-33 are pending in this application. Claims 32 and 33 have been cancelled. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the subject matter of these claims in this or another application. The Examiner is thanked for the indication that claims 1-8, 13-20, 22, 23, 30 and 31 are allowed. The Examiner is additionally thanked for the indication that claims 9-12, 21 and 24- 31 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome objections. Accordingly, claims 9, 10 and 24-26 have been amended as indicated in the *Listing of Claims* section of this paper to correct typographical errors. These amendments are merely formal in nature and not material to patentability.

Accordingly, no new matter has been added by these amendments and no estoppels are intended thereby. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

OFFICE ACTION

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claims 9, 21 and 26 stand rejected because of typographical formalities.

Accordingly, claims 9 and 21 have been amended to delete the recitation of “is” in accordance with the Examiner’s suggestion while claim 26 has been amended to delete the recitation of “at” as recommended by the Examiner. Claim 26 has been further amended to insert the term “first” at lines 6 and 7 in accordance with the Examiner’s suggestion.

No further elaboration is believed necessary and accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 9, 21 and 26 are now in condition for allowance.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 10-12, 24, 25 and 27-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph for being indefinite. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, claims 10, 24 and 25 have been amended to delete the recitation of “or the like” and are now believed to be in condition for allowance. Claims 11 and 12 depend from claim 10 and are believed allowable for at least this reason while claims 27-29 depend from claim 25 and are believed allowable for at least that reason.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

(1) Claims 32 and 33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lee (5,847,923). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, claims 32 and 33 having been cancelled rendering the rejection moot with respect to these claims. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this rejection.

CONCLUSION

No extension-of-time fee or other fees are believed due. However any extension of time necessary to prevent abandonment is hereby requested, and any fee necessary for consideration of this response is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account Number 50-2036.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of the application are believed in order, and such action is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite issuance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at (202) 861-1714.

Respectfully submitted,

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FIG. 1

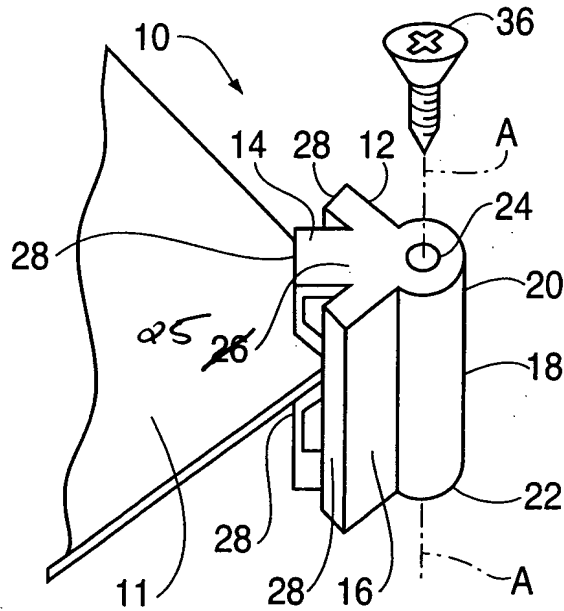


FIG. 2

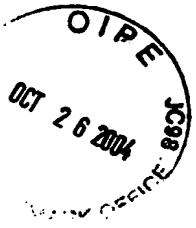
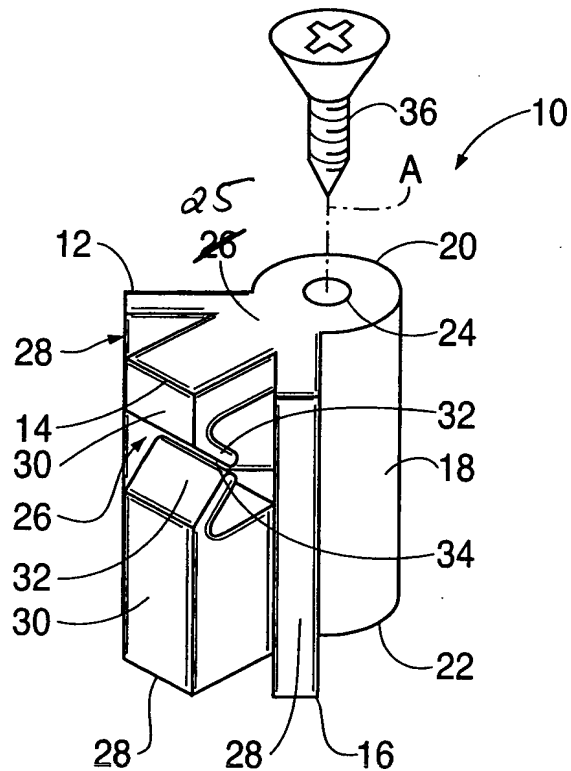




FIG. 3

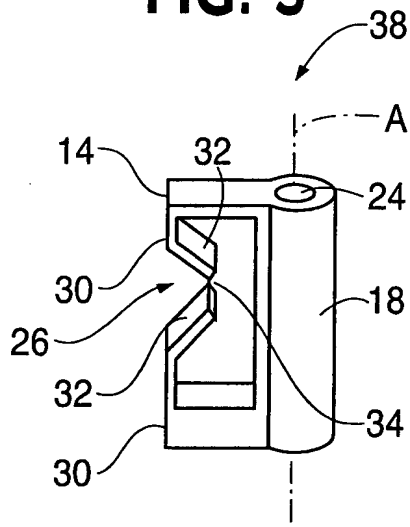


FIG. 4

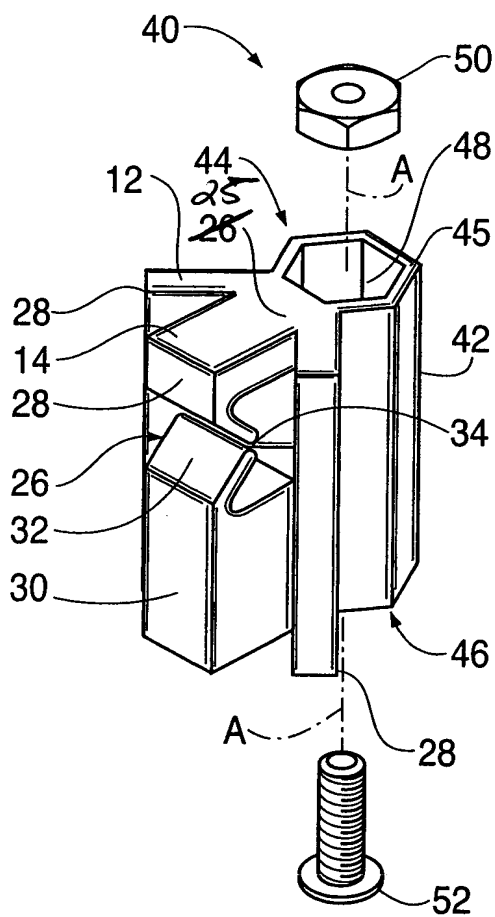




FIG. 11

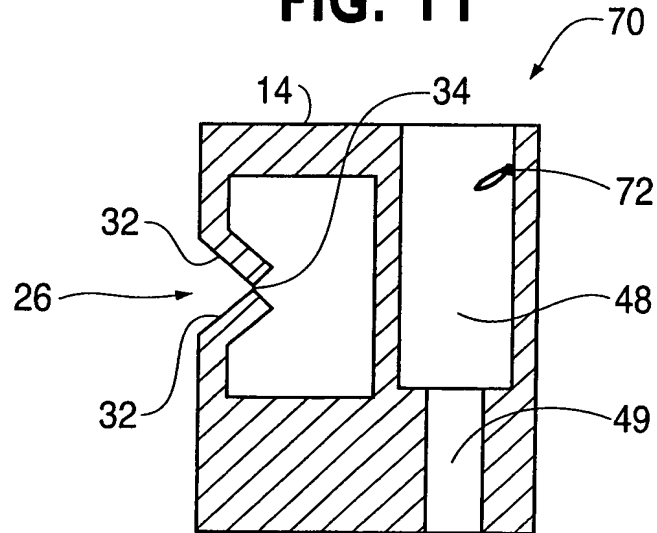


FIG. 12

